

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

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INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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TAGS PFOR, AS

SUBJ: STATE LABOR PARTY ORGANISATIONS MAINTAIN MODERATE STANCE.

VICTORIA SOCIALIST LEFT DEFEATED.

1. SUMMARY: VOTING AT SEVERAL SEPARATE STATE PARTY MEETINGS DURING THREE-DAY WEEKEND, SHOWS MODERATE AND CENTRIST ELEMENTS IN AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY STILL DOMINANT THOUGH POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER WAS SUBJECTED TO SOME MILD PERSONAL CRITICISM.

2. VICTORIA STATE A.L.P. MEETING IN MELBOURNE

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ATTRACTED SOME 450 DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS TO

WELL RUN, TIGHTLY SCRIPTED AND ORDERLY CONFERENCE. SECOND DAY OF CONFERENCE WAS MARKED BY APPEARANCE OF RECENTLY DEMOTED DR JIM CAIRNS, MAKING HIS FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN NEW PORTFOLIO AS MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT. IN EVENT, CAIRNS PUT ON FLAT PERFORMANCE WHICH WAS CHARACTERISED BY STATE PARLIAMENTARY LEADER CLYDE HOLDING, AS "A LITTLE SAD." DISAPPOINTING SOCIALIST LEFT, CAIRNS INDULGED IN SOME WRY SENTIMENTALISM AND SAID LITTLE OF ANY IMPORTANCE. HE DID HOWEVER, EXPRESS SOME FEEBLE COMMENTS ON DEFICIT FINANCING OF FEDERAL PROJECTS, SETTING THE SCENE FOR RESOLUTION ON PARTY ECONOMIC PLANNING, LATER IN CONFERENCE. CAIRNS MADE NO SUBSTANTIVE REFERENCE TO HIS NEW PORTFOLIO AND WAS WITHOUT VISIBLE EFFECT ON CONFERENCE, EXCEPT TO UNDERLINE DIS-ARRAY WITHIN STATE SOCIALIST LEFT.

3. ON FIRST DAY CONFERENCE ELECTED AS STATE PRESIDENT, PETER REDLICH, OF CENTER LABOR UNITY CAUCUS, DEFEATING LEFT-WING CANDIDATE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF METAL WORKERS' UNION, JIM RAWLSTON, WHO CONTINUES AS SENIOR STATE VICE-PRESIDENT. UNITY CAUCUS SUCCEEDED IN ELECTING ALSO, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, TRADES HALL COUNCIL, PETER NOLAN, AS JUNIOR VICE-PRESIDENT. MODERATE GROUP INCREASED STRENGTH IN ALL OTHER COMMITTEES OF STATE ORGANIZATION. SOCIALIST LEFT LEADER, BILL HARTLEY, CONTINUES AS STATE REPRESENTATIVE ON FEDERAL EXECUTIVE OF PARTY, BUT WITH SHARPLY REDUCED MAJORITY. OTHER FEDERAL MEMBER IS ROBERT HAWKE, FEDERAL PRESIDENT OF PARTY AND FEDERAL PRESIDENT OF ACTU.

4. VOTING ON ALL RESOLUTIONS OF CONFERENCE SHOWED DWINDLING LEFTIST STRENGTH, WITH EXCEPTION OF POPULAR RESOLUTION CONDEMNING FEDERAL PARTY POLICY IN REGARD TO PRODUCTION AND SALE OF URANIUM.

5. URANIUM RESOLUTION CALLS FOR SPECIAL FEDERAL CONFERENCE OF PARTY TO REVERSE FEDERAL PARTY POLICY AND PRESENT GOVT POLICY ON URANIUM PRODUCTION.
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SINCE RESOLUTION NEEDS ENDORSEMENT BY TWO OTHER STATE ORGANIZATIONS, AND SINCE CONCURRENT STATE CONFERENCES IN QUEENSLAND, NEW SOUTH WALES AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAVE ALREADY REJECTED PROPOSAL, FEDERAL POLICY PRESUMABLY WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED UNTIL NEXT REGULAR FEDERAL PARTY CONFERENCE IN 1977.

6. EFFORTS BY SOCIALIST LEFT TO SET ASIDE CONFERENCE

AGENDA TO HEAR ADDRESS BY VISITING LEADER OF PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, WERE RESOUNDINGLY DEFEATED.

7. ADELAIDE MEETING OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA PARTY, ALSO HELD OVER LONG WEEKEND, HEARD ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER GOUGH WHITLAM. TRADE UNION DELEGATES TOOK ACTION TO EXPRESS DISAPPROVAL OF PRIME MINISTER'S REMOVAL FROM OFFICE OF CLYDE CAMERON, AS MINISTER OF LABOR. MINISTER OF MINERALS, REX CONNOR, ABLY DEFENDED PARTY AND GOVT POLICY ON EXTRACTION AND SALE OF URANIUM. CONNOR'S INTERVENTION LED TO ADOPTION BY CONFERENCE OF MILD RESOLUTION ON URANIUM EXTRACTION, FALLING FAR SHORT OF LEFTISTS' INTENTION ON MATTER. GEORGE WHITTAN, SECRETARY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA LABOR PARTY TOLD LABATT JUNE 17TH, THAT PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM, STATE PREMIER DUNSTAN AND OTHER LEADERS, WERE WELL SATISFIED BY RESULTS OF "LARGEST STATE CONFERENCE EVER HELD IN ADELAIDE".

8. COMMENT: LABATT FEELS INTRODUCTION OF URANIUM ISSUE IN STATE CONFERENCES IN VICTORIA AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND ALSO IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND QUEENSLAND, SHOWS THAT THIS IS LEFT-WING OBJECTIVE FOR 1975. STAGE WAS SET AT BI-ANNUAL FEDERAL CONFERENCE IN TERRIGAL, WHEN QUESTION WAS FIRST MOOTED BY LEFT, BUT WAS THEN FIRMLY HANDLED BY MINISTER REX CONNOR. SINCE WHOLE "FUZZY" QUESTION OF URANIUM RAISES FEELING OF ILL-EASE AMONG GENERAL PUBLIC, LABATT EXPECTS LEFT-WING TO KEEP BRINGING QUESTION BEFORE PARTY CONFERENCES. URANIUM IS EVIDENTLY SUCCESSOR ISSUE TO OMEGA, ABORTION AND OTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POPULAR ISSUES RAISED BY LEFT-WING IN PAST YEARS. TROUNCING OF LEFT IN VICTORIA SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT WHITLAM AND CENTRALISTS STILL IN FIRM CONTROL OF PARTY POLICY AND LEFT-WING HAS FEWER PLACES TO GO WITHIN PARTY STRUCTURE. IN VICTORIA, PARTY CENTRIST, CLYDE HOLDING, NOW HAS HIS NOMINEES AS STATE SECRETARY, STATE PRESIDENT, STATE JUNIOR VICE-PRESIDENT, AND IN CONTROL OF MAJOR COMMITTEES. IN HIS OWN WORDS, HOLDING IS NOW IN "BEST POSITION MODERATES HAVE HELD SINCE 1955". NEXT FEW MONTHS WILL TEST HOW EFFECTIVE HOLDING CONTROL REALLY IS.

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